

General Instructions Following **Hernia Repair**

***If you have increasing redness around the incision sites, thick drainage, or fever above 101°F
call the office as soon as possible (314-434-1211) to speak with our clinical staff.**

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Everyone's pain tolerance is different. You may be very sore for 3 days following your surgery. Each day will get better, thereafter (*i.e. you will begin to notice improvement on day 4-5*). However, you may not feel 100% improved for 6-8 weeks after surgery, depending on your surgery.
- You may or may not turn black and blue around your incision and surrounding tissue. If you had a groin hernia, your groin (*if applicable*, scrotum and penis) may turn black and blue and become swollen. This swelling may become severe at times (*swelling in the scrotum may reach 3 times its normal size*). This is normal, however **if at any point you become unable to urinate go directly to the emergency room (ER)**. Gravity will push the bruising down as it resolves.

INSTRUCTIONS

- You may apply ice to incision for 1st day after your surgery in 15-20 minute increments. *Be sure to place a towel between your skin and the ice pack to avoid direct contact. Not very effective after 24 hours.*
 - A heating pad may also bring some comfort when used starting 2 days after your surgery in 15-20 minute increments. **Do not use high heat.**
- If you have small strips of tape directly on your skin (steri-strips) under your dressing, leave those on and do not remove them *until 7-10 days after surgery*.
- If you do not have a drain, you may shower **2 full days after** your surgery. Remove the dressing. Leave steri-strips on.
- The sutures used in your surgery are most likely self-dissolving and should not need to be removed.
- If a binder was placed, it is important to remember that its job is to support and cradle your abdomen. You may adjust it as needed to achieve this.

MEDICATIONS

- You may be sent home with prescription pain medicine. Try to first control pain with over the counter Tylenol or Ibuprofen (*Advil*), following package instructions. Use the narcotic pain prescription only if the Tylenol or Ibuprofen is not effective.
 - You **should not** drive while on pain medicine.
 - All narcotics cause severe constipation, as well as possible nausea and vomiting.

- If you take the prescription pain medicine, it is a good idea to take a stool softener to counteract constipation. You can also take Milk of Magnesia, MOM. All are over the counter.
 - If this is not effective in producing a bowel movement in **2 days**, please call our office for more instructions.

RESTRICTIONS

- You should not do any strenuous exercise for 6-8 weeks unless directed otherwise. No lifting over 10-15 lbs. (*Ex: a gallon of milk weighs 8 lbs*)
- You may walk as much as you want.

SURGERY SPECIFIC INFORMATION

- *For Incisional, Umbilical, or Recurrent Hernias:* If you have a *J-P* drain in, (*Jackson Pratt*) you will not be able to shower until the drain is removed. This usually is removed in the office on the 3 post op day. The doctor will tell you when this should be removed. You will call the office to make that appointment with the nurse practitioner or surgeon. ***To be removed you must be draining less than 30 ml of fluid in a 24 hour period.***
 - Please empty the drain at least twice a day and record your output. After emptying, be sure to squeeze the bulb tightly to collapse it before placing the cap to ensure there is suction. You do not need to save the fluid for your surgeon
 - You may use a wet, soapy washcloth to clean your body and surrounding skin of the drain after post-op day 2. Do not get your bandages surrounding the drain wet.
- *For Incisional, Umbilical, or Recurrent Hernias:* You may or may not be given an abdominal binder to wear after your hernia surgery, particularly umbilical and abdominal hernias. You should wear the binder until the drain is removed. After the drain is removed, you do not need to sleep in the abdominal binder, but you should continue to wear this during the day when you are up moving about. The binder may be washed (*not dried*).

FOLLOW UP

- Call the office for a “**post-op**” visit 1-2 weeks after your surgery.
 - *If staples are present, they will not be removed until 12-16 days post-op*
- If you have increasing redness around the incision, drainage, or fever above 101°F call the office.
 - Your incision site(s) *may* drain.
 - Do **NOT** soak healing incision site(s) – i.e. a bath, hot tub, swimming pool
 - Clear to light pink/red drainage is normal a few days after surgery
 - You may apply loose dressings to stop any drainage from soiling clothing.

The office is open for phone calls from 8am - 5 pm Monday-Thursday, Friday 8am -4 pm. For after hours, call the Medical Exchange @ 314-364-5262 to speak to the surgeon on call.